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**Subject:** [Fwd: Comment letter from SWAMC]  
**From:** Jeff Ottesen <jeff\_ottesen@dot.state.ak.us>  
**Date:** Mon, 12 Dec 2005 15:35:43 -0900  
**To:** DOT - STIP <DOT\_STIP@dot.state.ak.us>

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Comment letter from SWAMC  
Date: Mon, 12 Dec 2005 15:23:35 -0900  
From: Andy Varner <avarner@swamc.org>  
To: Jeff Ottesen <jeff\_ottesen@dot.state.ak.us>  
CC: adakcity@corecom.net, ljcotten@gci.net, atc@arctic.net, jolenegarner@yahoo.com, akutanadmin@gci.net, Jbereskin@gci.net, cityalek@nushtel.com, cityalek@nushtel.com, rzacharof@tdxak.com, Dand@aleutian-housing.com, mayor@aleutianseast.org, admin@aleutianseast.org, developmentdirector@aleutianseast.org, clerk@aleutianseast.org, samc.anc@gci.net, karenmontoya@worldnet.att.net, resourcedirector@aleutianseast.org, publicinfo@aleutianseast.org, atkacity@gci.net, atka2@arctic.net, admin@theborough.com, finance@theborough.com, manager@theborough.com, carveljr@hotmail.com, dick@chignik.org, cityofclarkspoint@starband.net, dorothyb@starband.net, planning@nushtel.com, bristolexpress@nushtel.net, cityofegegik@starband.net, ghthwd@gci.net, cityoffalsepass@ak.net, amscity@arctic.net, amscity@arctic.net, info@kib.co.kodiak.ak.us, tcabell@ptialaska.net, rgifford@kib.co.kodiak.ak.us, lfreed@city.kodiak.ak.us, mayor@city.kodiak.ak.us, clerk@city.kodiak.ak.us, lpboro@bristolbay.com, cityoflarsenbay@aol.com, KMO City@hotmail.com, KMO City@hotmail.com, nnvcak@bristolbay.com, kcbtc@arctic.net, cityofouzinkie@starband.net, pauloff@arctic.net, thecouncil@pedrobay.com, pipmayor@starband.net, cityofPTH@starband.net, cityofportlions@hotmail.com, gtnalemp@arctic.net, qtuunga@arctic.net, stpaulak@hotmail.com, sptcity@arctic.net, aeboro@gci.net, gkingsleypip@yahoo.com, chladick@ci.unalaska.ak.us, mayor@ci.unalaska.ak.us, fkelty@ci.unalaska.ak.us, ungacorp@arctic.net, Allen Kemplen <allen\_kemplen@dot.state.ak.us>, Mike Barton <commissioner dotpf@dot.state.ak.us>, Governor Murkowski <gov@gov.state.ak.us>, Gary Stevens <gstevens@swrsd.org>, Lyman Hoffman <Senator Lyman Hoffman@legis.state.ak.us>, Gabrielle LeDoux <Rep Gabrielle LeDoux@legis.state.ak.us>, Carl Moses <Rep Carl Moses@legis.state.ak.us>

Hello Jeff-

As promised, here is the STIP comment letter from the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference. Thank you again for sitting in at our Infrastructure Committee meeting on Nov. 30. We at SWAMC look forward to working with DOT and others to update the Southwest Transportation Plan in order to develop the region's infrastructure.

Regards,

**\*\*Andy Varner\*\***

**\*\*Economic Development Specialist\*\***

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Jeff Ottesen <[jeff\\_ottesen@dot.state.ak.us](mailto:jeff_ottesen@dot.state.ak.us)>  
Director  
Alaska Dept. of Transportation  
Division of Program Development

**STIP Comment Letter.pdf**

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December 12, 2005

Jeff Ottesen  
Director  
Division of Program Development  
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
3132 Channel Drive, Room 200  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Jeff:

On behalf of the fifty-four communities of Southwest Alaska and the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC), I am writing to offer comments and observations about the 2006-2009 Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). As with recent iterations of the STIP, we see a continuous delay in implementing the priorities of the Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan and long delayed community priority projects. These delays hinder our regional economy as well as Southwest communities' abilities to develop more efficient delivery of municipal, state and federal services.

SWAMC's particular concern is that the STIP is not in congruence with the Southwest Transportation Plan. The SWTP was approved as a component of the Alaska Statewide Transportation Plan (ASTP), and serves as a valuable prioritization tool for our region. The SWTP took many years and a lot of hard work and resources to produce. It is a long-range plan with many important projects critical to the development of the region. These top projects have already been significantly delayed and the STIP pushes funding for many of these projects back even farther. The planning and funding process is digging a deeper and deeper hole for our region's critical transportation needs. All of which begs the question, what is the efficacy of our transportation planning process if we have no hope of funding and implementing it?

We understand that funding for surface transportation has been severely impacted by a number of issues on both state and federal levels, including earmarking, a fixed fuel tax, escalating construction costs, and shortfalls in the Highway Trust Fund. All of these issues give the communities of Southwest Alaska little hope for seeing the timely implementation of the SWTP or priority community projects. The system for generating and allocating surface transportation funding is insufficient and increasingly unfair to rural communities. Given the continual slippage in implementing the SWTP, we believe it is time for the Alaska State Legislature and the Alaska Congressional Delegation to work together to correct the shortfalls in transportation funding. We recognize that transportation funding has been allocated to the Denali Commission. However, it is unclear how those funds will link to the SWTP and



ASTP. What we do not need is stove piping of funds for unplanned and unprioritized projects.

As you may know, SWAMC hopes to partner with DOT on a technical update to the SWTP that will analyze the regional transportation system in the context of the seafood supply chain. Improving our fisheries-dependent economy means moving our highly perishable products to market in the highest value forms possible. An effective transportation system is an essential component of fully realizing the economic value of our fisheries resources. However, given the current situation, we have to question whether SWAMC should put additional money, time and effort into a plan that is already significantly delayed.

We stand ready to work with DOT, the Alaska State Legislature, and the Alaska Congressional Delegation to work through solutions to get the SWTP back on track, to rectify an increasingly bleak funding picture, and to update the SWTP in the context of the seafood supply chain. We urge the Alaska Department of Transportation, the Murkowski Administration and the Alaska Congressional Delegation to work with us to development the transportation infrastructure needed to improve the economy of Southwest Alaska.

Respectfully,

Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glen Gardner".

Glen Gardner, President  
Board of Directors

Pc: Southwest Alaska Communities and Tribal Governments  
Southwest Alaska Legislative Delegation  
Alaska Congressional Delegation  
Governor Murkowski  
Commissioner Mike Barton  
Allen Kemplen, DOT